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SUBJECT: Kinshasa Broadcast Media Pledge to Try to Avoid Turning  
Political Adversaries into Enemies

REF: A) KINSHASA 1357, B) KINSHASA 1302

Sensitive but Unclassified. Not for Internet Distribution.

¶1. (U) Summary: In the wake of inflammatory broadcasts and counter-broadcasts pitting media allied with Jean-Pierre Bemba and Joseph Kabila against each other, the directors of Kinshasa television stations signed pledges of good conduct on August 26 and ¶30. There has already been one violation and a consequent suspension, that of pro-Bemba RLTV. Meanwhile, media actually owned by Vice-President Bemba have delayed resuming broadcasts, quite possibly because of threats to their staffs. Legitimate journalists continue to stand on one foot, not sure what kind of political reporting will get them into trouble. End Summary

Signing the Pledge of Good Media Conduct  
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¶2. (U) As noted in ref A, the Ambassador attended a ceremony on August 26, under the auspices of MONUC and the High Media Authority (HAM), during which the managing directors of six television stations signed a pledge to avoid provocative broadcasts. The stations involved were Bemba-owned CCTV and CKTV, pro-Bemba RLTV and Moliere TV, and pro-Kabila Digital-Congo and RTNC1 (state-owned television). They pledged to avoid political call-in shows, live or fake-live broadcasts from violent or provocative demonstrations, and shocking images. They also pledged to avoid defamation, justifications for racial or ethnic hatred, and televised political debates which feature just one point of view.

¶3. (U) In his formal remarks at the ceremony, aimed at the broadcast media, HAM President Modeste Mutinga further warned that even reporting the truth should not cross the line of libel or smear of the President, Vice-Presidents, or Ministers. Mutinga said this was not meant to censor the press.

¶4. (U) Mutinga also contended that the fighting in Kinshasa August 20-22 might have spread had the HAM not taken the action on August 17 of shutting down television stations CCTV, RTNC1 and RTAE for 24 hours (ref B).

¶5. (U) On August 30, about a score of representatives of other Kinshasa television stations signed the same pledge. On August 31, HAM President Mutinga was interviewed by Ferdinand Ferella of the Voice of America about the need to rein in broadcast provocations.

The First Violation  
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¶6. (SBU) On August 30, the signal of Kinshasa-based Radio Lisanga Television (RLTV) was shut down. RLTV director Simplicie Kalunga, who signed the pledge on August 26, told us the reason was the

content of a political talk show that day. Henry Wania, an MLC official known for making inflammatory statements, appeared on the show and, once again, tried to incite listeners to violence. Kalunga admitted that the talk show's host, Basile Olongo, had previously put RLTV in hot water with the HAM, adding that he intended to issue a public statement of apology for having violated the pledge.

#### Bemba-owned Media Still Silent

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¶7. (U) Bemba-owned television stations CCTV and CKTV, and RALIK (Liberte) radio are still off the air, even though they were expected to resume broadcasts on August 31. According to press-freedom NGO Journaliste en Danger, this could be the result of physical threats made against their personnel. JED met with about a dozen employees of CKTV on August 28, who reportedly told of menacing visits and anonymous phone calls warning them to quit the station.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: The HAM is valiantly trying to turn back the tide of venomous campaign rhetoric, which has become increasingly vitriolic. This effort will be hit or miss. Meanwhile, legitimate broadcast journalists have told us, through their representatives, that they have doubts now about how to report on current events, given the severity and ambiguity of the HAM strictures. End Comment

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